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BOOK REVIEWS

The Reorganization of Our Colleges. By CLARENCE F. BIRDSEY. New York: Baker & Taylor Co., 1909. Pp. ix+410.

This second volume by the author of *Individual Training in Our Colleges* is in part a further analysis of present conditions, and in part a plea for what is conceived to be the most needed reform, namely, a separate department of administration.

The aspect of the present situation which most impresses the author is its seeming wastefulness—not so much waste of money as waste of boys. About half who enter college do not graduate; a considerable percentage contract vices and attendant diseases; many become habituated to a low standard of achievement. This waste the author believes to be due not to pedagogical reasons primarily, but to the failure on the part of the colleges to employ a more adequate organization in dealing with the large numbers and changed social conditions. In the old small college the president could attend to the administration; and besides, the faculty were in a position to look after the students individually. In our large institutions the members of the faculty are now expected to specialize as scholars, the president has a multitude of general duties, and the administration has been tacked on as an extra burden to teachers already sufficiently occupied. Hence administration is now very poorly provided for.

From the student's standpoint the college presents two main divisions: (1) the time spent with instructors, (2) student life. This last is subdivided into (a) community activities, notably athletics, and (b) college home life, in which fraternities are a leading feature. The first division is naturally the immediate care of the pedagogical forces, but as this occupies only one-tenth of the student's time a large share of college influence must be controlled and guided in some other way, if at all. As a matter of fact it has been left mainly to the students themselves, and it is here that the troubles have their source. The pedagogical department cannot get good results from the students if student life is neglected. But—and this is the author's chief contention—the pedagogical department is not the one to remedy the trouble. Teachers should be left free to teach, not burdened with administrative cares. What is needed is a distinct department, to attack the situation from another angle. Such a department would make the student its center and look at instruction, community life, and college home as co-ordinate factors. It would keep such records as to know definitely about every student. It would study the desirable equipment, number of faculty, size of classes, and other factors from the point of view of student needs. It should be coequal with the department of instruction, while the president as general executive would deal with the interests of the institution as a whole, relying on the various departments for the expert knowledge of details.

That we need specialists in administration, just as we have specialists in the field of research or teaching, and that our large institutions must find new

methods of organizing student life if they are to be good places for the average boy, most thoughtful persons would agree. And that many suggestions might come from a study of business organization may well be true. But most who realize the subtle and complex nature of all human beings will be skeptical of the complete efficacy of any one scheme. It is highly important to follow up individual students, but Professor Dearborn's study has shown that most students maintain about the same rank in college as in high school. Are our present economic and social conditions bringing a sufficient number of commanding personalities into the teaching profession? Can we get the real thing we want from college life without some sort of living together—something more than the classroom? Is the subject-matter of instruction as well suited to the college student of today as that of a half-century ago was to the classes who then were in attendance? These are some of the questions we shall have to face. If the department of administration is to investigate these fundamental questions, by all means let us have one; but I suspect many will want a chance to have a say before they are settled, and it is not entirely time wasted when the average teacher is forced to do some thinking about them.

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Méthodes américaines d'éducation générale et technique. By OMER BUYSE.

Paris: Dunod et Pinat; Charleroi: Musée provincial de l'enseignement technique, 1908. Illustrated. Pp. 744.

Since the days of Bache and Horace Mann American educators have often journeyed to Europe to learn of the progress of education on that side of the ocean and to bring back inspiration for the conduct of our own schools. It has been comparatively rare for European observers to come to this country on a similar errand. M. Omer Buyse, curator of the Provincial Museum of Technical Education for Hainault, and director of the Higher Provincial Industrial School at Charleroi, Belgium, has published in the volume whose title appears above a painstaking and exhaustive study of some phases of our American educational system from data gathered during a sojourn of several months in this country. The wealth of material collected is enormous. M. Buyse traveled widely over the northeastern section of the United States, visiting schools from Boston to Chicago and St. Louis, and reaching at least as far south as Hampton. He is a keen, intelligent observer, his previous training having given him a proper apperceptive basis for appreciating accurately the particular phases of our educational system he set himself to describe. Withal he has been a most sympathetic critic, if anything erring on the score of too lavish commendation, rather than of too faint praise. Even here one is not justified in judging him too critically, and his shortcoming, if such it may be characterized, lies in the fact that he confined his account to the best in our schools. He selected the best field for observation, and evidently restricted himself to the best institutions in that field. Unfortunately our schools the country over hardly measure up to that high standard.

M. Buyse has not been content to carry back with him a mass of general impressions. He presents detailed facts in regard to the material installation,